DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 253 522 SP 025 800

AUTHOR Pokalo, Mariann
TITLE The Teacher Improvement Model.
PUB DATE 19 Apr 84
NOTE 14p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists (Philadelphia, PA, April 19, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Classroom Techniques; Delivery Systems; *Discipline Problems; *Psychological Patterns; Secondary Education; Systems Approach; Teacher Behavior; *Teacher Improvement; Teacher Student Relationship; *Teaching Styles
IDENTIFIERS *Teacher Improvement Model

ABSTRACT

The Teacher Improvement Model was begun as an Organizational Development Project using the parallel systems approach in a school for emotionally disturbed junior high school students. Teachers volunteered for committee work and requested observations and evaluations in an effort to define and establish a discipline model best suited to them. Such a model has been determined through use of the Child Variance Inventory, and individual training packets have been developed. The underlying assumption of the Teacher Improvement Model is that all teachers want to do a good job, however, when there is a discrepancy between what teachers want to do in a classroom, what they feel they are doing, and what is actually happening, dissonance results. Theoretically, consonance between what teachers want to do, feel they are doing, and what is actually happening, should result in improved teaching. A discussion is presented on the organizational precepts underlying the model and the psychological approaches to discipline which form its basis. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED253522

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Mariann Pokalo
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

The Teacher Improvement Model

Mariann Pokalo

Temple University

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, Philadelphia, Pa., 1984.

SP 025 800

Temple University and the Trenton, N.J. Public Schools have joined their effort in examining and improving school discipline and other administrative/staff concerns with the Temple Trenton Discipline Project. This global Project eventually evolved into the Teacher Improvement Model, a successful and interesting approach used in one particular Junior High School. The background and specific details of its inception and early growth are written in a paper by Hyman and Pokalo (1983). This paper will provide an update on work currently being done on the Project.

Organizational Development research has provided the basis for the Teacher Improvement Model. As such, it reflects key concepts included within Organizational Development: planned change; long-range involvement; organizational improvement in problem-solving, communication, collaboration, participation, trust, and in uncovering and confronting conflict; focus upon human processes and techno-structural factors; assistance of a change agent or catalyst; and use of behavioral science techniques to gather valid data (Fullan, Miles, & Taylor, 1980). Organizational Development in schools has been found to be most effective when administrative support and involvement is evident (Bassin & Gross, 1978). Entry conditions and approaches are crucial. They include such issues as readiness, task relevance, practicality, financial investment, and level of commitment. The role of the external consultant is also critical, and has

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

been found to effect the Organizational Development process as well as the end product.

The issues cited above were considered during the formulation of the Teacher Improvement Model, and were addressed as they arose throughout the process. Project staff consisted of persons involved in the Temple-Trenton Discipline Project, which was a joint effort of a consultant and advanced graduate students from Temple University and staff from the Trenton Public School system toward improving school discipline. The staff, acting in accordance with successful Organizational Development as reported in the literature, established a long-range project in the Flemming School in Trenton, N.J., which is a Junior High for the emotionally disturbed. Short-term goals and immediate effects also received some focus.

School staff developed and maintained their own Project, using the Project staff as consultants. Administrative support was visible, as was some financial investment. Furthermore, school staff were ready for change, and were willing to procure data to support and validate the changes needed and/or taking place. In summary, the Teacher Improvement Model developed along many of the same criteria that appear in research as having been indicative of successful Organizational Development.

The Teacher Improvement Model may also be considered in the light of research on the parallel systems approach to Organizational Development. Hyman (1976) defined the parallel

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

system as one which functions alongside a currently existing system, and self-perpetuates as it expands to become the major system. Direct coercion is not an element in the design, and it is understood that energy will not be expended on persons who will inevitable resist change. Hyman (1972) has listed conditions which affect the parellel systems approach. It may be noted that as well as demonstrating many of these effects, the Teacher Improvement Model is evolving into an example of a successful parallel systems approach. The success may be attributed to the subtle and unobtrusive nature of the Model, evidence of progress, support for change from all levels of school personnel, and the neutralization of opposition as it arose.

The Teacher Improvement Model

The underlying assumption of the Teacher Improvement Model is that all teachers want to do a good job. Dissonance results, however, when there is discrepancy between what teachers want to do in a classroom, what they feel they are doing, and what is actually happening. Theoretically, consonance in the above would result in improved teaching.

A Steering Committee from Flemming School met with staff of the Temple-Trenton Discipline Project to select a discipline model to adapt to their special education Junior High School. The models under consideration were: Psychodynamic-Interpersonal as represented by Transactional Analysis and the Dreikurs and

Dinkmeyer Programs; Ecological as developed from the research of Koinin and the techniques of Redl; Human Potential as a compilation of various group techniques, affective education, and values clarification; Behavioral as a focus upon contracting, tokens, social reinforcement, etc.; Sociological as represented by Social Literacy Training; and the Process Approach as encompassing a variety of processes derived from such programs as Reality Therapy and Teacher Effectiveness Training (Hyman & Lally, 1982).

The Steering Committee was unable to designate a single approach which they felt certain would meet the needs of their school/teachers. It was agreed that individual staff members would work best with techniques that they personally accepted. However, teachers felt that before the choice of any one approach to classroom management could be made, they needed to identify their beliefs about discipline. They needed to realize what they perceived themselves as doing, and receive feedback in regard to actual occurrences in the classroom.

Consequently, participating teachers requested that Project staff work with them individually, interview and observe, administer questionnaires and tests as needed, and so help them to choose a discipline model which was "right" for them. Some teacher observation had been conducted previously by graduate students from Temple University. These data were combined with that gathered from teams of advanced graduate

students who conducted evaluations of teachers participating in the Teacher Improvement Model. Instruments included: Flanders System of Interaction Analysis to determine teaching style; Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory to assess occupational interests; Myers-Briggs Type Indicator to examine personality type; a clinical interview using the Berkowitz-Marchon Teacher Interview Form to gather personal, social, and educational background; Sentence Completions to look at personality; Kounin Scale, The Coping Analysis Schedule for Educational Settings, and the Peck Rating Scale to assess certain teacher variables in the classroom; Anecdotal Reporting to describe teaching style during a time interval; Survey of Attitudes Toward Children to obtain information regarding punitiveness when disciplining children; Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory to assess attitude; Gordon's Personal Reactions to the Work Environment to present a hierarchy of needs; School Apperception Method (Modified) to obtain projective data in regard to feelings about school; Sander's Level of Questioning to determine questioning patterns in the classroom; a tally of Reinforcement Policies to determine the type most frequently used in the class; and the presentation of Classroom Discipline Situations to assess the discipline techniques most often used by the teacher.

Individual reports were written and presented to the teachers during private conferences. At that time a decision was not made but, instead, the teacher was urged to consider

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the report and its suggested model along with their own preferences in regard to discipline and classroom management. The teachers were to receive comprehensive packets of information on the discipline model which they had selected along with training in its implementation. A series of administrative/financial/logistical problems prevented the completion of this aspect of the Teacher Improvement Model, although other effort was made to keep the Model in motion. Presently, the individual training and presentation of discipline module packets is underway.

The observations which the teachers requested were examined along with all others that had been completed during the several years of the Flemming Project. So far, data from such measures have been inconsistent. That is, the amount of teacher talk vs. student talk, the indirect vs. direct style of teaching, as well as the presence of certain teacher characteristics has not been altered in a predictable manner through exposure to training in classroom management. Observations have been done at varying points during the school year for some teachers and have been accompanied by other measures (personality tests, surveys, questionnaires, etc.). Continued observation and analysis, especially following this phase of the Model, may lead to patterns and/or increased understanding of the teaching process.

ST COPY AVAILABLE

Recently, participating teachers voluntarily completed The Child Variance Inventory. This questionnaire, based on the work of Morse and Smith (1980) is used to obtain information relating to a teacher's approach to classroom discipline. Fifteen situations are presented, and the teacher's pattern of response indicates preference for the Human Potential, Psychodynamic/Interpersonal, Biophysical, Sociological, Ecological, or Behavioral approach. Their indicated preference determined the individual training packet which would be presented to them.

Research regarding The Child Variance Inventory is currently being done (Marchon, in progress). This research is a direct "spin-off" of the Teacher Improvement Model, and has implications far beyond the application in the Model school. The Inventory is undergoing standardization and is used in the workshop "Seven Approaches To Discipline" (Hyman , Lally, Lennox, & Wapner-Cohen, 1983). Seven Workshops were presented this year to over 210 teachers and staff.

The Teacher Improvement Model, then, was begun as an Organizational Development Project using the parallel systems approach in a school for emotionally disturbed Junior High aged students. Teachers have volunteered for committee work and have requested observations and evaluations in an effort to define and establish a discipline model best suited to them. Such a model has been determined through use of The

Child Variance Inventory, and individual training packets have been presented.

These discipline modules were designed specifically for use with teachers. Information was obtained from Morse and Smith (1980), Hyman et al (1983), as well as other sources. In informal interviews, a number of teachers were asked for their preferences regarding in-service and other training materials. The overall response was "something quick and easy to read". With this in mind, modules were written clearly and concisely. Psychological and theoretical jargon is replaced by practical and common terminology. Examples are abundant. The arrangement of material is such that a teacher can read along in order or skip to an area of particular concern. A question-answer format is employed to focus attention and direct one's reading. The sections are: What is the Behavioral/ etc. Approach? But What Does That Mean To Me as a Teacher? How Do I Know That I Can Learn To Use It In My Classroom? That All Sounds Good But - Does It Really Work? When Would I Use It? I Have This Child Who Always...Now What? I'll Try It...What's Next? How Do I Know If It Has Been Effective? But What About Intervention Techniques? How Can I Learn More About This? In this manner, information is presented regarding theory, application of theory to education, training that is available, efficacy data, adaptation of theory to the classroom, diagnosis of the problem, data collection, specific intervention

techniques, post-treatment data collection, and bibliography for further reading. The natural progression of theory, classroom application, getting started, follow-up, etc. contains all that one need know in order to implement the approach. Each module culminates in a section on recommendations/ interventions. It is expected that this type of written material will transfer the information to the teacher, since it is presented in a non-threatening, common sense, directly applicable format. Feedback from the teachers will provide interesting and helpful information in this regard.

This phase of the Teacher Improvement Model is especially visible. However, other subtle repercussions of the Model are also evidenced. The Child Variance Inventory research has been mentioned above. Two other examples of Projects that have developed are explained below.

A unique type of Behavior Modification Program has been implemented in the School, with the help of the School Psychologist and Project Consultant. "Quality Time", or time at the end of the day during which a child has free choice of approved activity, is the reinforcement for appropriate behavior during the school day. Implementation of this program is actually a landmark occasion when viewed in terms of the school prior to the Project Consultation. At that time, teachers could not agree on a Behavioral model for the school since some felt that children should not be "bribed" to behave in school. Adoption

of a plan then, is direct support for and evidence of success with the parallel systems approach within Organizational Development.

As staff began to examine the consequences of discipline infractions, they realized that the information available for analysis was, in fact, very difficult to analyze. Most misbehaviors were reported anecdotally on the infamous "pink slips". These forms were sent to the main office or the In-School-Suspension Room. The Principal as well as the Steering Committee wanted to be able to compare the results of the various approaches to classroom management in terms of the number and types of misbehaviors reported by those teachers. Therefore, the Project Director introduced a uniform discipline reporting system which had already been under development. Since the school had a computer, a program for such systematic reporting was written and is currently in use. This is discussed in a paper by Berkowitz (1984).

Overall, this past year has seen a variety of ideas and approaches tried in the Flemming School. Perhaps the stimulation of thought and activity is one of the more valuable aspects of the Teacher Improvement Model. Teachers continue to request feedback through observations of their teaching, and remain committed to involvement with the Temple-Trenton Discipline Project. Several teachers now function as "turnkeys" within

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

the school system. At this point, we are requesting feedback on our training packets and await further developments.

References

Bassin, M., & Gross, T. (1978) Organizational development: A viable method of change for urban secondary schools. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Toronto.

Berkowitz, G., & Lally, D. (1984). The use and development of a microcomputer-based support system for tracking discipline infractions. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, Philadelphia.

Fullan, M., Miles, M., & Taylor, G. (1980). Organizational development in schools: The state of the art. Review of Educational Research, 50, 121-183.

Hyman, I. (1972). The school psychologist and change: Using the approach of parallel systems. New Jersey Psychologist, 22.

Hyman, I. (1976). A bicentennial consideration of the advent of child advocacy. Journal of Clinical Child Psychology, 4, 15-20.

Hyman, I., & Lally, D. (1982). A study of staff development programs to improve school discipline. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Montreal.

Hyman, I., Lally, D., Lennox, N., & Wapner-Cohen, M. (1983). Seven approaches to discipline. Temple University.

Hyman, I., & Pokalo, M. (1983). The teacher improvement model. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association of School Psychologists, Detroit.

Morse, W., & Smith, J. (1980). Understanding child variance. Virginia: The Council for Exceptional Children.